

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 12 and 21-30 are presently active. Claims 1 -11 and 13-20 having been canceled, and Claims 25-30 having been added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Toba et al (Japanese Patent Publication No. 09-216182 A) in view of Wydman (U.S. Pat. No. 5,993,141). Claims 1-4, 10-11, and 16-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiroki (U.S. Patent No. 5,306,380) in view of Wydman. Claims 16 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okutani (U.S. Pat. No. 5,135,608) in view of Toba et al and further in view of Wydman. Claims 5-6, 8-9, and 18-19 were objected to as being dependent from a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base and any intervening claims. Claims 12 and 21-24 were indicated as being allowed.

Firstly, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 5-6, 8-9, and 18-19, and the indication of allowance for Claims 12 and 21-24. Accordingly, in order to expedite prosecution of this application to allowance, the present amendment cancels Claims 1-11 and 13-20, and adds new Claims 25-30 directed to the allowable subject matter in Claims 18 and 19.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 12, 21-25, and 28 and the claims dependent therefrom patentably define over the applied prior art.¹

Finally, this amendment is submitted in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.116 which after final rejection permits entering of amendments canceling claims, complying with any requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office Action, or presenting rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal. The present amendment cancels claims and adds new claims including the identified allowable subject matter. No new matter has been added, and the new claims do not raise new issues requiring further consideration and/or search. It is therefore respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered under 37 C.F.R. §1.116.

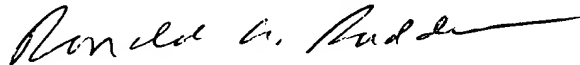
¹New Claim 25 is written in independent form and contains the subject matter in independent Claim 16 and objected to dependent Claim 18. New Claims 26 and 27 depend from new Claim 25, and thus contain the allowable subject matter of Claim 18. New Claim 28 is written in independent form and contains the subject matter in independent Claim 16 and objected to dependent 19. New Claims 29 and 30 depend from new Claim 28, and thus contain the allowable subject matter of Claim 19.

Application No.09/655,304
Reply to Office Action of July 30, 2003

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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